

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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R 080905Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1677

INFO CINCPAC

USDEL JEC PARIS

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 0240

DEPARTMENT PASS IMMEDIATE IBS/NCA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, MILI, VS, VN

SUBJECT: MILITARY BRIEFING ON PHUOC LONG SITUATION

REF : SAIGON 221

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. BELOW IS TEXT OF MILITARY BRIEFING ON PHUOC LONG SITUATION GIVEN PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF GVN DECLARATION JANUARY 8 (REFTEL). WE BELIEVE INFORMATION IN THIS BRIEFING MAY BE USEFUL TO DEPARTMENT FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES.

2. BEGIN TEXT: BRIEFING ON THE ILLEGAL CAPTURE OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE BY THE COMMUNISTS. EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: AS WE HAVE REPORTED TO YOU LAST FRIDAY, COMMUNIST FORCES LED BY TANKS BEGAN THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL ON JANUARY 3, 1975 AFTER HAVING ILLEGALLY OVERRUN DUC PHONG DISTRICT TOWN ON DECEMBER 14, 1974, BU NA MILITIA BASE CAMP ON DECEMBER 15, 1974, BO DUC DISTRICT

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TOWN ON DECEMBER 22, 1974, DON LUAN DISTRICT TOWN ON DECEMBER

26, 1974. PHUOC BINH DISTRICT TOWN ON DECEMBER 31, 1974 AND
BA RA MOUNTAIN-TOP BASE CAMP ON JANUARY 1, 1975.

3. ON FRIDAY LAST WEEK, WE HAVE REPORTED TO YOU THAT COMMUNIST
FORCES SPEARHEADED BY TANKS BEGAN THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST
PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL EARLY IN THE MORNING OF
JANUARY 3, 1975 FROM THE NORTHWESTERN AND SOUTHWESTERN
DIRECTIONS. THANKS TO EFFECTIVE SUPPORT BY GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT,
THESE ENEMY ASSAULTS WERE REPULSED AT THE GATEWAYS OF PHUOC LONG
PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

4. ACCORDING TO RADIO COMMUNICATIONS MONITORED BY FRIENDLY
RECEIVERS, ELEMENTS FROM THE 165TH AND 141ST REGIMENTS OF
THE 7TH NVA DIVISION SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES IN ATTACKING
THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF PHUOC LONG FROM THESE TWO DIRECTIONS.

5. THEREFORE, AROUND NOON, JANUARY 3, 1975, COMMUNIST GUNNERS
HEAVILY SHELLED THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL
CAPITAL WHILE COMMUNIST TANK-LED TROOPS ATTACKED THE PROVINCIAL
CAPITAL FROM THE SOUTH. GOVERNMENT INFANTRY RECONNAISSANCE
TROOPS FOUGHT BACK AND DESTROYED THREE OF ENEMY TANKS,
HOWEVER, OTHER ENEMY TANKS WERE ABLE TO PENETRATE THE CITY.

6. ANYWAY, THE COMMUNIST ATTACKING FORCE WAS BLOCKED IN THE
AREA NEAR THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL'S LOGISTIC AND ADMINISTRATION
CENTER IN THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE CAPITAL CITY BY 2100
HOURS, JANUARY 3, 1975. EARLY IN THE MORNING OF THE NEXT DAY,
COMMUNIST GUNNERS SLAMMED ABOUT 1,000 ROUNDS OF ASSORTED HEAVY
WEAPONS INTO THE VICINITY OF THE CHURCH AND SECONDARY SCHOOL OF
PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AND AFTERWARD, COMMUNIST TROOPS
ADVANCED TOWARD THE VICINITY OF THE CITY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL AND
SIMULTANEOUSLY, ANOTHER ATTACK WAS LAUNCHED BY THE COMMUNISTS
FROM THE SOUTHERN DIRECTION OF THE PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL
CAPITAL, ONCE AGAIN.

7. THIS ASSAULT BY THE COMMUNISTS WAS ALSO STOPPED BY
GOVERNMENT TROOPS. FIVE OF THE ENEMY TANKS INVOLVED IN THE
ASSAULT WERE DESTROYED BY GOVERNMENT INFANTRY RECONNAISSANCE
TROOPS AND MILITIAMEN.

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8. ON JANUARY 5, 1975, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF PHUOC LONG
WAS AGAIN HEAVILY HIT BY A BARRAGE OF MORE THAN 1,000 ROUNDS OF
ASSORTED HEAVY WEAPONS FIRE. THE SHELLING ATTACK SERIOUSLY
DAMAGED THE CITY'S MARKETPLACE, CIVIL SERVANTS' HOUSING
COMPLEX AND BUS STATION.

9. BY THIS TIME, COMMUNIST TROOPS MOVED TO THE WEST OF PHUOC
LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL BUT THEY WERE RESISTED BY THE CITY'S

MILITIA DEFENDERS AND DRIVEN TOWARD THE CITY'S CENTER.
FIERCE FIGHTING LASTED THROUGH THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 5, 1975
AND ONE OF THE ENEMY TANKS WAS DESTROYED.

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10. DUE TO BAD CONDITIONS OF WEATHER ON JANUARY 4 AND 5, 1975,
AND FURTHERMORE, (DUE TO THE FACT THAT) A NUMBER OF COMMUNIST
TROOPS WERE INSIDE THE CAPITAL CITY OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE
INHABITED BY CIVILIANS, GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT WERE (INSTRUCTED)
TO BOMB ONLY THE ENEMY UNITS OUTSIDE OF THE CITY AND NOT TO
PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE CITY'S DEFENDING UNITS.

11. THROUGHOUT JANUARY 6, 1975, THE ENEMY PENETRATION FORCE WAS
DRIVEN INTO THE CENTER OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AS
FIERCE FIGHTING RAGED UNTIL EARLY IN THE EVENING. AT POINTS,
THE CITY'S DEFENDERS HAD TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNISTS IN HAND-TO-
HAND COMBAT. IN THIS FIGHTING, FOUR MORE ENEMY TANKS WERE
DESTROYED WITHIN ONE KILOMETER OF THE CITY HALL. CASUALTIES
ON EACH SIDE IN THIS FIGHTING WERE VERY HEAVY. BY ABOUT 2100,
JANUARY 6, 1975, COMMUNIST GUNNERS FROM THE HIGH GROUNDS
AROUND PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL POUNDED SEVERAL THOUSAND
ROUNDS OF MIXED ARTILLERY AND ROCKET INTO THE CITY'S MILITARY

AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER AREAS OF THE CITY AS WELL. FOLLOWING THE SHELLING, COMMUNIST TROOPS ASSAULTED THE COMMAND POST OF THE CITY WHICH IS ITS MILITARY HEADQUARTERS.
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THE HEADQUARTERS' DEFENDERS, SUPPORTED BY FLARE AND GUN SHIPS, REPULSED SEVERAL ASSAULTS BY THE COMMUNISTS. AS THE FIGHTING WENT ON, BY 0100 HOURS, JANUARY 7, 1975, RADIO CONTACT WITH PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS WAS LOST. HOWEVER, FRIENDLY AIRCRAFT STILL MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH AN ELEMENT OF GOVERNMENT TROOPS OUTSIDE THE HEADQUARTERS. PILOTS REPORTED AT LEAST SIX ENEMY TANKS DESTROYED AROUND THE HEADQUARTERS. THE FIGHTING WENT ON, SEVERAL SUSTAINED FIRES WERE SEEN IN THE CITY.

12. BY 0930 HOURS, JANUARY 7, 1975, ALL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WITH PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL'S DEFENDING UNITS WERE LOST. THE HEADQUARTERS OF MILITARY REGION 3 LOST ALL CONTACT WITH ITS SUBORDINATE UNITS IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

13. FROM THAT TIME, THE WHOLE PHUOC LONG PROVINCE WAS CONSIDERED ILLEGALLY CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE DISREGARDED THE PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT AS WELL AS THE WORLD'S PUBLIC OPINION BY BLATANTLY USING A DIVISIONAL SIZE FORCE - OF ABOUT 8,000 TROOPS BACKED BY TANKS AND ARTILLERY - IN THE ATTACK AGAINST ABOUT 2,000 GOVERNMENT TROOPS DEFENDING PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

14. UNFAVORABLE GEOGRAPHICAL AND WEATHER CONDITIONS HAVE HAMPERED GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO REINFORCE AND TO PROVIDE AIR SUPPORT FOR THE DEFENDING FORCE OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

15. ALTHOUGH, OUTNUMBERING OUR FORCE BY A RATIO OF FOUR TO ONE, PLUS HAVING ADVANTAGES OF TANK AND ARTILLERY SUPPORT, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE PAID A COSTLY PRICE IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO ILLEGALLY CAPTURE PHUOC LONG PROVINCE.

16. THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FORCE OF PHUOC LONG PROVINCE, THUS, HAS WELL DEMONSTRATED ITS DETERMINATION TO FIGHT BACK THE ENEMY IN THE PROVINCE. END TEXT
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